1: Mi Mi Khaing 1-5 (no date) 1946 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4
Indians

the sameik by using an uncoiled dry and slightly wavy tress to offer a wanton contrast to the smooth severe cylinder. In the absence of permanent waving, and with the straightness of the Burmese hair, I admired the enterprise of a Rangoon family who subsidized, with supplies of coconut oil, the Indian gardener next door, an Oriya coming from a race with wavy raven locks, until his tresses grew to the requisite length and they bought them for binding into a sameik. This sameik is discarded after marriage, but in the case of a girl who does not get married early, it continues in a more restrained form, a *sameik-kwin*, when it is tucked back into the bottom of the cylinder to form a loop. Shortly after the age of twenty-five, she discards it altogether and makes just a sadone like a married woman. Kyi-Kyi's sadone was broad and low; after she had finished the rest of her toilet she tied her hair by drawing a thread backwards from her forehead so that stray hairs were tucked into the sadone, and the same with the upswept hair at the back. She also carried the Burmese powder puff in her luggage though I never saw her use it. These, which we also still use as the best means of applying Max Factor powder, were scraps of old cotton vests, about ten inches square, which had been soaked and washed in thanakha, thus avoiding the horrible newness of the unused modern powder puff.

My aunt's clothes were also aggressively her own. This was noticeable especially with her going-out clothes, for which she would never have any imported materials. She declared that imported silks, crêpe-de-chines and the like, could not be washed and beaten clean like the Burmese silks and cottons. Neither did they produce suitable colours and designs for elderly spinster ladies like her—they were either gay and skittish, or of a soberness that depressed without pleasing one. What she loved most were the *ya-khaing* longyis, silks and cottons woven in Arakan, in small check patterns, but so stout that you soaked them and beat them hard before the first wearing, and then washed them again and again until you had a pliant closely-woven fabric whose colour and freshness lasted a lifetime. One of my sisters, whom my aunt pressed to wear a ya-khaing longyi in preference to a crêpe-de-chine piece whose bright butterflies had appealed to her sixteen-year-old fancy, stated that no doubt if she slept in the ya-khaing longyi every night for seven years, it would just be at its best for her to wear when she reached the age of twenty-five. For more dressy occasions, my aunt wore *zin-mè* silks, the design of which was reputed to come from Chiengmai in Siam, and in imitation of which Burmese weavers now produce zin-mè longyis in dull red and green geometrical designs, like old lacquer colours. Kyi-Kyi sometimes wore *Bangauk* longyis also, said to come truly from Bangkok, but more often woven in Burma in imitation of the characteristic twist

CLOTHING

Clothing Habits

The standard garments worn by U Myaing consist of a longyi which reaches from his waist to his ankles, a shirt or a vest for his upper torso, clogs or slippers for his feet. Head covering is seldom worn but for every-day purpose would be a western style hat or a bamboo topee. For special occasions the GAUNG BAUNG would be worn. When U Myaing works he takes off his shirt and vest because, he said, otherwise he would have no other shirt to wear afterwards. In Pantanaw, when they went to PWES (stage performances) and festivals he had on a vest, a shirt, and a jacket. 291 [292] [296]

> "Sometimes, when I feel that way, I wear these at home even though I do not intend to see the PWE. It is just because I am in the habit of wearing them. At night I sleep in my vest. When it is cold, I pull on a shirt over that. In the daytime ordinarily I wear vest, shirt and cotton longyi. Here in the camp I cannot wash my shirt and vest very often - I do so only when they have become soiled, not at regular intervals of time. But the shirt becomes soiled every three or four days and the vest every two days or so. On the other hand I possess three longyis and wash each of them after one wearing, when I have a bath."

The females of the family habitually wear a women's longyi sometimes called a HTA-MEIN, extending from the waist to the ankles clogs or slippers and an EIN-GYI over a bodice for the upper torso. The two younger children wear western style frocks. The specific items worn are given below. The clothing items may be organised into two headings, one dealing with U Myaing's clothing, and the second with the clothing of the remaining (female) members of the family. [177]

U Myaing's Clothing.

CHEK LONGYI (Cotton Longyi): — The LONGYI is a piece of cloth reaching from the waist to the ankles. It is stitched so as to be cylindrical in form, somewhat wider than twice the girth of the individual. The patterns are most frequently squared and of different colours resembling the scotch tartan closely. Men's colours are dark or pastel colours mainly. It is secured about the waist with several twists one upon the other in the front midline. Ceremonial LONGYIS are wider than those of ordinary use giving a fold of 6 to 8 inches in front. [292]

General Burmese Attitudes about and Usages of Personal Accoutrement.

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"LU-HMAR-AH-MOOT-TAUNG-HMAR-AH-COOT" — "People must have decent dress just as a basket must have a rim" expresses the basic attitude of the Burmese towards personal accoutrement. By "decent" is meant fitting and proper to a person's station in life and the occasion. Most important, the garments must be clean and maintained in a state of repair. The cotton objects are cleaned by whacking on rock slabs at a water source; the silk garments are aired in the sun and shaken and when absolutely necessary washed - this removes the crispness for which they are valued. Recently dry cleaning establishments have operated in Rangoon. But these are quite expensive and used extensively only by the wealthy. "If one has only one shirt it must be white (i.e. clean)".

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Perhaps the most important means of asserting status is by personal accoutrement. The value of jewels, fine silks for the women of the family has been mentioned above. The Burmese have a low opinion of the person who does not dress up to his station. But are also scornful of those who dress above their qualifications. For example, a man who wears the religious all white costume inappropriately is called CHAUK-TWE-DAW (cat-goodman) or pretender. The story is told of a cat who always faced the sun with open jaws. When visiting rats asked why he replied that the rays of the sun nourished him. Yet the last of the visiting rats invariably disappeared into the cat's paw. A war-time atrocity story records the sad tale of a Burmese maiden who was too poor to afford a decent longyi and therefore was forced to commit suicide.

The variety of different longyis worn also indicate status. It is said that some wealthy Rangoon ladies buy a new silk longyi for each social occasion - and rapidly discard them when slightly soiled. In the main, however, the Burmese "pay great respect to their clothes" and boast rather of wearing clothes that are years old - thus indicating the high quality of the cloth. Young girls frequently have Mandalay silk longyis handed down to them by their grandmothers. Success is indicated by the constant increase in quality and quantity

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Menopause: MEE YAT THWAY SOKE (Woman Disorder-Blood End). Daw Aw Zar reached her climacteric at the age of 50. She did not suffer from menopause symptoms, as she had taken the following preventative measures: she ha eaten boiled duck eggs three at a time, and very frequently. Kyauk-Hpayon fruit jam was eaten all the time (since 25 ticals of jam can be offered on the altar and can then be eaten to last for 10 days. Phalaung-taung-hmwe root is thinly sliced, mixed with 25 ticals of palm jaggery, 6 pice worth of the 5 kinds of Hsa-mon seeds, and some salt, brewed together and taken. Also, each about two fingers small, were boiled and eaten with rice. Daw Aw Zar ate all these things until the age of 60.

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Smallpox: (Preventatives). The Burmese preventative measure for smallpox consists in rubbing the whole body in horse sweat and drinking mare's milk. The liver of the python is mixed with water and taken internally. Python flesh is also eaten and python skin is burnt and the ash mixed with jaggery (palm sugar) and made into pills to be taken orally. This is quite effective, and even if smallpox does come on later, it only does so in a mild form, as in the case of two of U Myaing's children who had only about 15 pustules each. U Myaing applied the preventatives. He tells us that practioners can shift the location of pustules. A pustule about to appear on the eyes of a child can be shifted elsewhere by using the tongue of the mother.

Medical injections-Vaccination and Cholera. Back in Pantanaw the English vaccinator came around only once in about three years, and consequently the children have been vaccinated only once in their lives. This, however is a service which is rendered free of charge. The youngest child has been vaccinated once here. The same remarks hold true for cholera injections also, except that every one in the family including the adults, has had only one inoculation each in their whole lives.

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Cleanliness. For bathing, U Myaing's family uses the hydrant in the camp twice a day. The soap which is used for washing clothes is also used on the body. In Pantanaw the river was used twice a day, and they had special soap for the body. In the camp clothes are washed every day because of their small number. In one month, the family uses up thirty cakes of soap each worth 2 annas, for bathing and washing. Teeth are cared for by cleaning them every morning with either salt or charcoal. This is true both of Pantanaw and refugee camp. It involves no special cost. In Pantanaw, the water used was water from the stream. This water was very clear, but it was also filtered before being used. In the refugee camp here the water is very clear and is used as it comes from the hydrant

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Warts: KATO. The cure for warts is to kill the mother wart by prodding it with some sharp instrument or pinching it away slowly.

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An important factor in the health of the family has been the supernatural. Daw Aw Zar was completely serious in informing us that the reason she was in good health at 72 years of age was that she had been good in a previous existence. This idea is apparently tied to the concept of merit acquisition in which the deeds of the present existence add to or subtract from the well being of the future existence. U Myaing states it in this manner:

"The good in this life is because of the meritorious acts in the previous existence."

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

No kind of wool is indigenous 286

130. LAYING OUT THE WARP.

or is spun or woven in Burma. Cæsar Frederick in 1569 mentions woollen cloth among the goods brought to Burma, *viâ* Arakán. Web vests for boys and men, of European manufacture, are becoming general. The use of shoes of the European shape is bringing in the use of socks and stockings. The addition of a European shirt under the Burman jacket makes up the incongruous kit affected by the modern office clerks. With the increased use of body-linen have come the Indian washermen. The coloured stuffs are washed by the Burman women. The native dyes wash well, especially the silk dyes. An alkali-earth (*sappya*) is found in Burma, but soap is of modern introduction, and is now sold in every bazár. Needles used to be brought to Burma from China, as well as scissors, though the latter are also fashioned in Burma; at present both are imported from Europe. Burmans work the needle from them, like other Asiatics. The work is pinned to a cushion at the head of a post planted on the work-box. The use of the thimble was unknown until tailors came over from India, but is now general. The bulk of the tailoring is in the hands of immigrants from China; but their prejudice against the sewing-machine is helping to transfer the business to the Burman women. Nearly every well-to-do family in the towns has its sewing-machine.

291 [283 439] [296 463] 439 413 286 [177] 463 294

At sunrise the women start with their water-pots for the day's supply, and again before they cook the evening meal, which finishes the day's work. On the morning errand they do the most of their washing. In the evening they carry a spare cloth to change for the one they bathe in, which they wash and coil into a pad to put between the head and the water-

131. BURMESE CARVING OF WEAVING-LOOM.

462 [532] 512 515